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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/776,841	02/11/2004	Patrick J. Helland	13768.1304	3027
47973 7590 05/11/2010 WORKMAN NYDEGGER/MICROSOFT 1000 EAGLE GATE TOWER 60 EAST SOUTH TEMPLE SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84111				
			EXAMINER SIDDIQI, MOHAMMAD A	
			ART UNIT 2454	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 05/11/2010	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/776,841

**Applicant(s)**

HELLAND ET AL.

**Examiner**

MOHAMMAD A. SIDDIQI

**Art Unit**

2454

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --**  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 10 February 2010.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 17-25 and 29 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 17-25 and 29 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/GS/US)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_

- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. Claims 17-25 and 29 are presented for the examination. Claims 1-16, 26-28 and 30 have been cancelled.

***Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114***

2. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 02/10/2010 has been entered.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

3. Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because computer-readable medium appears in the preamble. The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) is obliged to give claims their broadest reasonable interpretation consistent with the specification during proceedings before the USPTO. *See In re Zletz*, 893 F.2d 319 (Fed. Cir. 1989) (during patent examination the pending claims must be interpreted as broadly as their terms reasonably allow). The broadest reasonable interpretation of a

claim drawn to a computer readable medium (also called machine readable medium and other such variations) typically covers forms of non-transitory tangible media and transitory propagating signals *per se* in view of the ordinary and customary meaning of computer readable media, particularly when the specification is silent. See MPEP 2111.01. When the broadest reasonable interpretation of a claim covers a signal *per se*, the claim must be rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as covering non-statutory subject matter. See *In re Nuijten*, 500 F.3d 1346, 1356-57 (Fed. Cir. 2007) (transitory embodiments are not directed to statutory subject matter) and *Interim Examination Instructions for Evaluating Subject Matter Eligibility Under 35 U.S.C. § 101*, Aug. 24, 2009; p. 2.

The USPTO recognizes that applicants may have claims directed to computer readable media that cover signals *per se*, which the USPTO must reject under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as covering both non-statutory subject matter and statutory subject matter. In an effort to assist the patent community in overcoming a rejection or potential rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 in this situation, the USPTO suggests the following approach. A claim drawn to such a computer readable medium that covers both transitory and non-transitory embodiments may be amended to narrow the claim to cover only statutory embodiments to avoid a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 by adding the limitation "non-transitory" to the claim. Cf. *Animals – Patentability*, 1077 Off. Gaz. Pat. Office 24 (April 21, 1987) (suggesting that applicants add the limitation "non-human" to a claim covering a multi-cellular organism to avoid a rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101). Such an amendment would typically not raise the issue of new matter,

even when the specification is silent because the broadest reasonable interpretation relies on the ordinary and customary meaning that includes signals *per se*. The limited situations in which such an amendment could raise issues of new matter occur, for example, when the specification does not support a non-transitory embodiment because a signal *per se* is the only viable embodiment such that the amended claim is impermissibly broadened beyond the supporting disclosure. *See, e.g., Gentry Gallery, Inc. v. Berkline Corp.*, 134 F.3d 1473 (Fed. Cir. 1998).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 17-25 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maurille et al. (6,484,196) (Hereinafter Maurille) in view of Carney et al. (7,451,444) (Hereinafter Carney).

6. As per claim 17, Maurille discloses a method that facilitates message processing, the method performed within a computer comprising one or more processors and computer system memory, the method comprising:

requesting one or more messages (issuing query in the message table, col 9, lines 29-31).

determining (upon receiving the message, col 10, lines 18-20) from information associated (relational database maintains the association, 108, fig 1, col 6, lines 44-57) with the one or more message that each of the one or more message belongs to a conversation group (conference [conversation], Fig 7C and 108, fig 1, col 6, lines 44-57);

linking (updating message table and other related tables, col 10, lines 31-35) the one or more messages by a group identifier (the process of linking includes updating relation in the related tables, 108, Fig 3A, col 10, lines 5-67);

locking the conversation group ("locking (conversation history plus agreement capabilities)" col 2, lines 65-67).

Maurille did not specifically disclose the lock preventing a disparate requestor from accessing the one or more messages; and providing exclusive serial access to the messages such that only one service can process related message at any time; when a reader has finished processing the messages, receiving a notification from the reader to release the lock; and releasing the lock.

However, Carney discloses the lock preventing (fig 2) a disparate requestor from accessing (fig 2, col 2, lines 11-15) the one or more messages (fig 2, col 2, lines 11-25); and providing exclusive serial access to the messages such that only one service can process related message at any time (fig 4, serialization, col 1, lines 39-46; col 3, lines 41-47); when a reader has finished processing the messages, receiving a

notification from the reader to release the lock (fig 4 and fig 19, col 5, lines 36-55) ; and releasing the lock (fig 4, col 5, lines 50-51). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to combine the teachings of Carney and Maurille. All the claimed elements (serialization and preventing access by locking records, releasing locks) were known in the prior art and one skilled in the art would have combined the elements as claimed by known methods with no change in their respective functions and the combination would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

7. As per claim 18, the claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17, above. In addition, Maurille discloses receiving one or more related messages (issuing query in the message table, col 9, lines 29-31) associating the related messages with the conversation group (the process of associating includes updating relation in the related tables, 108, Fig 3A, col 10, lines 5-67).

8. As per claim 19, the claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17, above. In addition, Maurille discloses automatically updating the conversation group (144, fig 2) with incoming related messages (col 10, lines 30-35).

9. As per claim 20, the claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17, above. In addition, Maurille discloses utilizing a conversation group identifier (272, fig 2) to lock the conversation group ("locking (conversation history plus agreement capabilities)" col

2, lines 65-67, col 10, lines 18-67, updating requires locking the records).

10. As per claim 21, the claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17, above. In addition, Maurille discloses storing the message in-order (142, fig 5B, message record M001 –M006)

11. As per claim 22, The claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17, above. In addition Maurille discloses receives a request for a message (issuing query in the message table, col 9, lines 29-31);

determining (upon receiving the message, col 10, lines 18-20) from information associated (relational database maintains the association, 108, fig 1, col 6, lines 44-57) with the message that message belongs to a conversation group (conference [conversation], Fig 7C and 108, fig 1, col 6, lines 44-57);

associating (updating message table and other related tables, col 10, lines 31-35) the messages and other related messages with a conversation group (the process of linking includes updating relation in the related tables, 108, Fig 3A, col 10, lines 5-67);

locking the conversation group ("locking (conversation history plus agreement capabilities)" col 2, lines 65-67) via a conversation group identifier (conference ID 144, Fig 2, the conference Id must be used to lock).

12. As per claim 23, claim is rejected for the same reasons as claims 22, above. In addition, Maurille discloses utilizing message identifiers (M001, M002, Fig 3B, col 10,



lines 25-40) to determine whether messages are related (M001, M002, Fig 3B, col 10, lines 25-40, same record owner).

13. As per claim 24, claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 22, above. In addition, Maurille discloses receiving the conversation group identifiers to associate with the conversation group (142, fig 3B, col 10, lines 18-67).

14. As per claim 25, claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 22, above. In addition, Maurille discloses dynamically updating conversation group with incoming related messages (142, fig 3B, col 10, lines 25-40).

15. As per claim 29, claim is rejected for the same reasons as claim 17, above. In addition, Maurille discloses a computer readable medium storing computer executable instructions which when executed upon one or more computer processors facilitate processing by causing the processors to perform the method of claim 17 (elements of fig 1).

### ***Response to Arguments***

16. Applicant should submit an argument under the heading "Remarks" pointing out disagreements with the examiner's contentions. Applicant must also discuss the

references applied against the claims, explaining how the claims avoid the references or distinguish from them.

### ***Conclusion***

17. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to MOHAMMAD A. SIDDIQI whose telephone number is (571)272-3976. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday -Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nathan J. Flynn can be reached on (571) 272-1915. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/NATHAN FLYNN/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2454